



# LOUISIANA SENATE

## LOUISIANA POSITIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- According to a study by the U.S. Department of Commerce, merchandise exports from Louisiana climbed to a record \$65.1 billion in 2014. The study listed petroleum and coal products as the state's most exported products. Agricultural products were next, followed by chemicals. The study also estimates that exports from Louisiana supported 283,000 jobs in the U.S. in 2013 (The Advocate, February 2015).
- The economic performance of the nine-parish Baton Rouge area was 65<sup>th</sup> among the world's 300 largest metros in 2014, according to the nonprofit Brookings Institution. Rankings were based on each metro area's rate of growth for both employment and gross domestic product per capita (The Advocate, January 2015).
- Louisiana jumped 11 spots in *Forbes* ranking of Best States for Business to No. 29. Louisiana is tied for the second most improved state in the U.S. since January 2008. The gain stems from several significant category gains including business costs, regulatory environment and economic climate (Office of the Governor, November 2014).
- *Site Selection* magazine ranked Louisiana No. 2 in the nation in its Top State Business Climate, Louisiana's highest ranking. Five years ago, Louisiana ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in the magazine's annual rankings, which are determined 50 percent by an index of tax burden criteria according to the Tax Foundation and KPMG's Location Matters analysis and the states' performance in Conway Data's New Plant Database, which tracks new and expanded business facility activity, and 50 percent by a survey of corporate site selectors who are asked about the lack of red tape, financial assistance and cooperation by government officials. Louisiana also ranked ninth on *Site Selection* magazine's annual rankings of expanding and new projects in 2014 (NOLA.com, November 2014).
- A national location-marketing firm, Development Counselors International, ranked Louisiana as having the nation's 10<sup>th</sup>-best business climate in its 2014 report. The firm surveyed 356 corporate executives and site-selection consultants. Additionally, the report ranked Louisiana Economic Development as tied for the second best state economic development agency (NOLA.com, November 2014).
- According to new figures released by the Louisiana Workforce Commission, nonfarm employment in Louisiana reached a record of 1,981,300 in July, a gain of 31,800 from a year earlier. State employment records were also set in July for the construction,

professional and business services, education and health services, as well as leisure and hospitality sectors (The Advocate, September 2014).

- Metropolitan areas across south Louisiana fared well in 2013 in terms of the value of goods and services they produced, according to findings released by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Development. The percentage gains in gross domestic product placed Lake Charles among the nation's 10 fastest-growing metro areas. Two other metros – Baton Rouge and Houma-Thibodeaux – were among the top 20 (The American Press, September 2014).
- For the fourth year in a row, Louisiana ranks No. 6 in the U.S. in *Area Development* magazine's list of 2014 Top States for Doing Business, which surveys leading site-selection consultants on which U.S. states are the most attractive for business investment (Baton Rouge Business Report, September 2014).
- According to a report by the International Trade Administration, exports from the New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner metropolitan area hit a record \$30 billion, an increase of 23 percent, or \$5.7 billion, from 2012 to 2013 – ranking it eighth in the nation. Goods exported from Louisiana supported 282,540 jobs in 2013, and the Baton Rouge and Lake Charles metro areas joined New Orleans among the country's top 50 exporters (NOLA.com, September 2014).
- Louisiana ranks No. 3 in Kiplinger's 10 Most Tax-Friendly States. The rankings compare a range of taxes in each state, including income tax, sales tax and gas tax (NOLA.com, August 2014).
- *Business Facilities* magazine ranked Louisiana 1<sup>st</sup> for Best Business Climate, the state's highest ever business climate ranking. The magazine also rates Louisiana as No. 2 for exports leaders; No. 2 for natural gas production; No. 3 for economic growth potential; No. 5 for best infrastructure; No. 8 for lowest industrial electricity rates; and No. 10 among state employment leaders. (The Office of the Governor, July 2014).
- *Business Facilities* magazine named Louisiana FastStart the No. 1 workforce program in the country for the fifth year in a row, noting its impressive diversity and coordination of economic development efforts across the state. Louisiana FastStart provides customized recruitment, screening and training to companies expanding in or relocating to Louisiana at no cost (The Office of the Governor, July 2014).
- Louisiana leads all U.S. states in the value of industrial construction projects during 2013 and is ranked second overall for all commercial construction, according to a study released by the NAIOP Research Foundation (The Advocate, July 2014).
- In Pollina Corporate Real Estate Inc.'s annual ranking of top pro-business states, Louisiana ranks No. 16. Pollina ranks the 50 states on 32 factors, including evaluation metrics such as business tax burdens, workforce training programs, workers compensation costs, economic development incentives, energy costs, marketing programs and state economic development efforts (Department of Economic Development, July 2014).

- Louisiana was rated as the 5<sup>th</sup> most small business-friendly state overall in the 2014 Thumbtack.com Survey of Small Businesses. Its No. 5 performance in 2014 represents a 9 spot improvement from last year. Additionally, Louisiana ranked No. 1 for ease of hiring new workers and friendliness of environment regulation, No. 6 for friendliness of tax code, No. 7 for regulatory friendliness and friendliness of zoning regulations, and No. 8 for friendliness of health and safety regulations (NOLA.com, June 2014).
- Gallup ranks Louisiana as the No. 1 state in the U.S. for workforce engagement. The poll identified Louisiana workers as the most likely to be involved in and enthusiastic about their work (Baton Rouge Business Report, June 2014).
- In the U.S. Chamber Foundation's Enterprising States 2014 ranking, Louisiana ranks within the top 10 in numerous areas. The state ranks No. 1 in both export intensity and export growth, No. 2 for per capita income growth, No. 5 for state and local tax burden, No. 6 in higher education efficiency and No. 10 in college affordability (NOLA.com, June 2014).
- According to data collected by Illinois-based *Manufacturers' News Inc.*, manufacturing employment in Louisiana has risen for a third straight year (Baton Rouge Business Report, June 2014).
- *Southern Business and Development* magazine has named Louisiana as its State of the Year. Additionally, the magazine ranks Baton Rouge as its 2014 Major Market of the Year and Lake Charles as its 2014 Mid-Market of the Year. (The Advocate, June 2014).
- According to a survey of CEOs done by *Chief Executive* magazine, Louisiana ranks as the 9<sup>th</sup> best state to do business in, up from 13<sup>th</sup> last year. The survey, which polls more than 720 CEOs, looks at proximity to markets and resources, industry regulation, tax policies, workforce quality, living environment and education resources (The Advocate, May 2014).
- Louisiana ranked No. 4 in *Site Selection* magazine's Top Ten Competitive States of 2014. The ranking is based on a variety of criteria, including new facilities, capital investment, job creation and other business climate factors (Louisiana Department of Economic Development, May 2014).
- At nearly \$17.1 billion, the value of Louisiana exports was the sixth-largest in the nation in the first quarter of 2014 according to World Trade Center of New Orleans figures (The Advocate, May 2014).
- In *Site Selection* magazine's annual "Governor's Cup" rankings, Louisiana ranks 3rd in the U.S. for states that gained the most new and expanded corporate facilities on a per-capita basis in 2013. The "Governor's Cup" measures the quantity of significant business development projects for the calendar year. (Department of Economic Development, March 2014).
- *Trade & Industry Development* magazine's Ninth Annual Corporate and Community Impact, or CiCi, Awards recognized two of Louisiana's 2013 business development projects. Louisiana's Community Impact project winners are the IBM project in Baton

Rouge, La. with 1,342 new direct and indirect jobs and the Gulf Coast Spinning project in Bunkie, La. with 1,029 new direct and indirect jobs. (Trade & Industry Development, March 2014).

- The IBM technology center project in Baton Rouge is named as one of the top eight economic development deals in the U.S. according to *Business Facilities* magazine. The publication named the project as an honorable mention selection in its annual Economic Development Deal of the Year competition while also honoring Louisiana as a runner-up in the State of the Year competition (The Advocate, February 2014).
- With an estimated 2,315 new businesses created in the state between 2009 and 2012, Louisiana is ranked No. 19 nationally for net new business growth in the years immediately following the recession. According to a new report out from CareerBuilder and Economic Modeling Specialists, which is based on an analysis of Labor Department data, Louisiana was among 29 states and the District of Columbia that saw net new business growth during the span (Baton Rouge Business Report, February 2014).
- CNN Money ranks Louisiana as the ninth most entrepreneurial state, based on 2012 data from the Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurial activity. According the report, Louisiana had a business start-up rate of 400 for every 100,000 adults in 2012 (NOLA.com, July 2013).
- According to the third annual State of Women-Owned Business Report, Louisiana had the fourth-largest growth rate nationally in the number of businesses led by women since 1997. The report, commissioned by American Express OPEN, reveals that revenues generated by women-owned businesses in Louisiana saw a 170 percent increase, the highest in the nation (The Advocate, April 2013).
- According to a National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's *National Marine Fisheries Service* report released in March, Louisiana seafood ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the U.S. in terms of total economic impact generated from seafood sales in 2011. Louisiana came in second in terms of local seafood poundage landed per state and it landed the most shrimp and menhaden in the country. According to the report, the Louisiana seafood industry's total economic impact was \$1.8 billion, supporting 32,818 people (The Times Picayune, March 2013).

## **EDUCATION**

- Louisiana as the second best charter school laws in the nation according to National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, a non-profit national advocacy group in Washington, D.C. (The Advocate, January 2015).
- According to a national charter school advocacy group, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, charter schools in Louisiana rank second nationally in growth, performance and innovation. The ranking uses 11 measures to rate the health of charter school movement in 26 states (The Advocate, October 2014).

- According to a report done by the non-profit Save the Children, Louisiana schools are well prepared to protect children in the event of a natural disaster. Louisiana scored “satisfactory” in the four criteria on the organization’s 2014 Disaster Report Card (NOLA.com, September 2014).
- The number of college credits earned in 2014 by Louisiana students on Advanced Placement (AP) exams increased by more than 1,250 credits over results in 2013 – the greatest increase in number of credits earned in state history. The College Board and the U.S. Department of Education notes Louisiana’s increase in qualifying scores of 3, 4 or 5 as the biggest gain of any state since 2011. (Louisiana Department of Education, July 2014).
- The National Council on Teacher Quality, a Washington, D.C., based organization, gives Louisiana the second-highest overall grade among all states – a B – in its latest report on each state’s policies on teacher effectiveness (Baton Rouge Business Report, January 2014).

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

- Tulane University Law School and the A.B. Freeman School of Business rank among the top law and business schools in the country, according to U.S. News and World Report’s 2016 Best Graduate Schools ranking. The law school ranked 50<sup>th</sup> nationwide and the business school ranked 61<sup>st</sup> (NOLA.com, March 2015).
- In U.S. News & World Report’s 2015 ranking of best business schools in the country, the LSU Flores MBA Program is ranked in the top 50 at the No. 44 spot among public institutions. To calculate its rankings, U.S. news surveyed all 464 master’s programs in business accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International in fall 2014 and early 2015. (NOLA.com, March 2015).
- *Forbes* recognized Tulane, LSU, Louisiana Tech, Centenary, Loyola, University of New Orleans, ULL and Southeastern among their top 650 universities. Tulane ranked the highest of the state schools at 147; LSU came in second at 190. The list is based on student satisfaction, post-graduation success, academic success and student debt rates (The American Press, September 2014).
- *The Princeton Review* ranks Loyola, Tulane, University of New Orleans, Xavier, LSU, ULL and Centenary as “top” colleges based on academics, quality of life and financial aid satisfaction (The American Press, September 2014).
- McNeese State University has been selected as one of the best regional universities and one of the top public universities by U.S. News and World Report (The American Press, September 2014).
- Dr. Johnny Matson, psychology professor and distinguished research master at LSU has been named to ‘Thomson Reuters’ 2014 list of “The World’s Most Influential Scientific Minds.” The list includes scientific researchers whose published work is among the most cited papers from 2002 to 2012 – raking in the top one percent of their subject field and year of publication (The Times-Picayune, August 2014).

- **Joseph Savoie, president of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, is the recipient of the tenth annual Governor's Technology Award for Best Application of Technology in Louisiana, presented by the Louisiana Technology Council (The Advocate, September 2013).**
- **Five Louisiana colleges have been ranked among AffordableCollegesOnline.org's top 58 low-cost colleges with high starting salaries. Louisiana Tech ranks 16<sup>th</sup> and McNeese State University ranks 32<sup>nd</sup> (The American Press, June 2013).**
- **The Daily Reveille has been named the country's Best All-Around Daily Student Newspaper by the Society of Professional Journalists in its national 2012 Mark of Excellence Awards. Additionally, two writers on The Daily Reveille staff have were names as finalists (The Daily Reveille, May 2013).**
- **According to a U.S. News & World Report ranking of colleges' online degree programs, Loyola University New Orleans has the sixth best online graduate-level nursing program. The survey included 237 institutions and weighed factors such as graduation rates, faculty credentials, academic advising of students, digitized libraries, tech support, live tutoring and technology used (The Advocate, January 2013).**

## **LOCAL/CITIES**

- **Bastrop and Ruston have been chosen by Site Selection magazine as some of the top micropolitan areas in the country. To be selected by Site Selection Magazine as a top micropolitan of 2014, a community must have experienced economic growth by one or more of the following criteria: a minimum of a \$1 million project; creation of 20 or more jobs; new construction of at least 20,000 square feet. Bastrop was recognized as a top micropolitan for Drax Biomass' \$120 million project that will create more than 50 new direct jobs. In Ruston, Mortgage Contracting Services doubled the size of its facility and grew to 70 employees in 2014. It is expected to employ 90 by 2019 (The News Star, March 2015).**
- **According to a poll done by YouGov, New Orleans is one of the 'coolest' cities in America (YouGov.com, March 2015).**
- **The New Orleans tourism industry grew in 2014. During the year, the city attracted 9.52 million visitors, that is 2.6 percent more than in 2013, according to a study produced by the University of New Orleans Hospitality Research Center for the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau and the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corp. (NOLA.com, March 2015).**
- **The Fodor's Travel guide has named St. Francisville one of the nation's top 20 day-trip destinations (The Advocate, October 2014).**
- **The Houma-Thibodaux metro area ranked No. 8 in the Forbes list of fastest-growing small cities. The metro rankings were based on population growth from 2000 to 2013; job growth from 2001 to 2014; real per capital personal income growth from 2000 to 2012; and growth**

of regional gross domestic product per job from 2001 to 2012 (The Advocate, September 2014).

- The Lake Charles metro area had a 27 percent increase in construction employment – the highest among the nearly 340 metro areas surveyed – according to a report by Associated General Contractors of America. The metro area grew from 10,600 construction jobs in July 2013 to 13,500 in July 2014. The entire state of Louisiana saw an increase of 7 percent (The American Press, September 2014).
- *Travel + Leisure* has named New Orleans as the 10<sup>th</sup> best city in the World, the first time since 1996 the city has made the Top 10 list. The list is based on factors such as sights and landmarks, culture and arts, restaurants and food, people, value and romance (NOLA.com, July 2014).
- New Orleans and Baton Rouge are among the top 25 cities leading the recession recovery, according to Wallethub's 2014 ranking of the Most Recession-Covered Cities (NOLA.com, July 2014).
- According to *Business Facilities* magazine, Baton Rouge has the second-best economic growth potential in the U.S. The magazine states that the ranking is due to the capital city's success in executing the state's strategy of bringing together business and higher education in innovative public-private partnerships that spur initiatives in new high-growth sectors (The Advocate, July 2014).
- Lafayette was recognized for Achievement in IT Infrastructure for its LUS Fiber network in *Business Facilities* magazine's 2014 Economic Development Awards (Louisiana Department of Economic Development, July 2014).
- *Site Selection* magazine ranks IBM's new technology center in Baton Rouge as one of its Top North American Deals of 2013 (Department of Economic Development, May 2014).
- The Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), the Greater New Orleans Inc. and the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance are ranked among *Site Selection* magazine's top 10 economic development organizations. This is the fifth year in a row that BRAC made the list and the third year in a row that the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance has been selected (NOLA.com, May 2014).
- Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Shreveport ranked first, second and third, respectively, among U.S. cities for cost competitiveness, according to KPMG's 2014 Competitive Alternatives report. Among mid-sized cities, those with populations of 1 million to 2 million, New Orleans ranked first. Among small cities, or those with populations of less than 1 million, Baton Rouge ranked first and Shreveport second (Louisiana Department of Economic Development, March 2014).
- Baton Rouge is the 7<sup>th</sup> most successful city in landing corporate investments along the Mississippi River between July 2012 and the end of 2013 according to *Site Selection*'s new ranking, the Big Muddy Cup, which ranks Mississippi River regions by the number of

corporate facility project investments they have landed, according to their population (NOLA.com, March 2014).

- The Baton Rouge metro area tied for the second best region for new and expanded corporate facilities, in a ranking by *Site Selection* magazine. The Baton Rouge Area Chamber worked with fifteen companies in 2013 that announced expansions or jobs, \$112 million in new payroll and \$4.4 billion in capital investment (The Advocate, February 2014).
- Lake Charles ranked No. 31 in the nation on a list of metropolitan cities' expected growth, according to a report by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The study, done by HIS Global Insight, ranked cities based on gross metropolitan product and annual job growth (The American Press, January 2014).
- New Orleans was named one of the 21 must-see destinations in the world by *National Geographic Traveler* in the magazine's December 2013/January 2014 edition. New Orleans was one of two destinations in the United States on the list, which reflects "the most exceptional" travel destinations in the travel world, according to the magazine (The Advocate, January 2014).
- A recent Forbes magazine breakdown of population shifts among cities found New Orleans gaining some of the highest percentages of working age residents from 2007 to 2012. The city topped the list as a migration destination for age brackets between 30 and 64 (The Times Picayune, December 2013).
- *Business Facilities* magazine, which focuses on business site selection, ranks the Port of New Orleans No. 1 among ports. The magazine says the ports rating is attributed to the \$100 million in infrastructure improvements at the Port of New Orleans designed to accommodate expansion of the Panama Canal and the 2012 debut of improvements to the Napoleon Avenue Container Terminal. In the magazine's information technology jobs category, New Orleans ranks third (Times Picayune, July 2013).
- Prairieville ranked No. 2 on Coldwell Banker Real Estate's "Top Booming Suburbs in America Survey." According to Coldwell Banker, the number of Prairieville residents with jobs grew by 2.7 percent and the average commute time was 30 minutes. The ranking is based on year-over-year increases in employment; unemployment percentages below the national average; as well as access to banks and grocery stores, proximity to schools, and commute times (The Advocate, July 2013).
- Baton Rouge and New Orleans rank among the top cities of their size on *Forbes* magazine's list of "Cities Winning the Battle for Information Jobs." Baton Rouge ranks No. 7 on the list of medium-sized metros and New Orleans ranks No. 3 on the list of big cities. *Forbes* based its rankings on information sector employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics from 2001 to present (The Advocate, May 2013).
- Lafayette ranks first in the country in terms of economic and workforce measures, according to *Area Development* magazine, a site selection and facility planning publication.



The magazine ranked 380 metro areas in 21 economic and workforce indicators. Baton Rouge ranks 88<sup>th</sup> and New Orleans ranks 155<sup>th</sup> (The Advocate, May 2013).

## **GOVERNMENT/MISC**

- The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has been lauded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for exceptional child support enforcement collections. In fiscal year 2014, DCFS distributed over \$390 million in child support collections (DCFS, January 2015).
- *MovieMaker* Magazine has named Baton Rouge and New Orleans as the first and second best small cities to live and work in as a filmmaker in 2015. The magazine noted Louisiana's generous tax incentives and film and TV production facilities. The magazine ranked its five best film-making cities ranging from 100,000 to 400,000 in population (The Advocate, January 2015).
- Shared Hope International and Polaris have ranked Louisiana among top states for combating human trafficking. Shared Hope International ranked Louisiana as the top state in the nation for cracking down on human trafficking. Shared Hope grades states on 41 key legislative components that must be addressed in the states' laws to respond to minor sex trafficking crimes. Louisiana scored a 96, the highest in the country. Polaris ranked Louisiana as a Tier 1 state for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row for its efforts to strengthen penalties for human traffickers and protect victims of these crimes (NOLA.com, November 2014).
- Louisiana is ranked as the second-best state in which to retire by Bankrate.com. The Florida-based site base site says that Louisiana's high rating is attributed to its jazz, beignets, low taxes and balmy weather (The Business Report, May 2013).
- Louisiana attracted more than 26 million visitors in 2012, breaking a previous tourism record set in 2003. According to an annual tourism study by the University of New Orleans Hospitality Research Center, 26.6 million people visited Louisiana in 2012, spending \$10.7 billion. The uptick in visitors resulted in the creation of 8,000 new tourism jobs and generated \$665 million in state tax revenue (The Advocate, April 2013).
- Louisiana led the nation last year in the feature-film production, according to a 108-film survey by a Los Angeles nonprofit think tank, FilmL.A. Inc. Eighteen live-action movies filmed in Louisiana resulted in spending estimated at \$750 million (The Advocate, March 2013).

***PREPARED BY THE SENATE COMMUNICATION OFFICE***

**P.O. Box 94183**

**Phone (225) 342-9737 Fax (225) 342-0617**

**[websen@legis.state.la.us](mailto:websen@legis.state.la.us)**

**Updated March 12, 2015**